

SD DATE

BRINGING YOU OUR LATEST NEWS

Vita

Building Sustainable Livelihoods

Issue No. 6

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Local men and women from Shama, Ethiopia returning home with their new apple saplings

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

VITA NEWS FROM ETHIOPIA

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GREEN GIVING

TAX RELIEF FOR VITA

FUNDRAISING & EVENTS

A Christmas message

From our CEO and our President

Even in these gloomy economic times in Ireland, your generosity allows Vita to bring great cheer to those suffering much greater hardship and distress.

Vita is looking at our 20th anniversary in 2009 as the perfect opportunity to meet personally with our long-standing and devoted supporters all round Ireland, to express our thanks and show the impact of your money on the lives of families in Africa. Already, Vita supporters in Kilkenny and Dundalk are galvanized to twin with communities in Ethiopia

and fundraising drives have already started.

Vita is working with values which Fr Kevin Doherty and Fr Norman Fitzgerald established in 1989 when Vita started as Refugee Trust, particularly respect for the communities and donors whom we serve, and partnership with governments who lead their people towards development.

We in Vita are redoubling our efforts and looking to increase the impact of our programme to help communities in Eritrea and Ethiopia to change their lives.

The Irish Government and EU now provide substantial funds to match your core funding, which means that every €1 you provide delivers up to €5 in benefits to families in Africa.

Here's to a Happy Christmas and 2009 for our donors, and to the families we serve in Africa.



John Weakliam, CEO

Fr Norman Fitzgerald, President



VITA NEWS FROM ETHIOPIA



Vita Ethiopia Team

Fish Pond

In Arba Minch Vita is developing a fish pond micro enterprise for 15 men and women members. Members with no other means of income have the opportunity to be involved in relevant training and as a result, generate income for themselves and their families through the upkeep and running of the fish pond. At the moment members of the enterprise have sourced the land for pond construction which is near the Kulfo River. Vita engineers are also in consultation with the Urban Agriculture Office in Arba Minch regarding the design of the fish pond and within the coming weeks the construction of the fish pond will commence.

In the meantime the members are being provided with skilled training from experts. The main areas of the training are business administration, entrepreneurship, book keeping, quality control and customer service, and material management. Once the fish pond has been constructed it will be formally handed over to the members and they will then be fully responsible in managing and maintaining it and in turn earning an annual income of 1,000 Birr (€ 80).

Eri Silk Cocoon Production

Also in Arba Minch, the production of eri silk cocoons is one of Vita's other micro enterprises. People with no other means of income have the opportunity to receive training and generate income for themselves and their families. Through working with this micro enterprise, men and women will get access to resources and skills in order to engage in long term development activities and lead better lives.

Currently under this micro enterprise, there are 20 men and women members who are receiving skilled training on silkwood cocoon production from other experts in this area. After their training has finished each member will receive their license which allows them to administer the eri silk cocoon business effectively. Also along with Vita field officers, they are looking for suitable land to build a silk house and to plant castor trees, which serve as food for silk worms.

When the enterprise is fully up and running the members will start to sell the eri silk cocoons and will be in full time employment with a sustainable annual income of 1,200 Birr (€96).

This scheme should help members to earn sustainable annual income of 700.00 birr (€55) and improve food availability for their families.

Apple and Vegetable Income Generation Scheme

In the Shama Kebel area of Ethiopia Vita has created an Apple and Vegetable Income Generation scheme for local beneficiaries. Within this project there are 300 members who have been carefully selected. These members have been provided with apple seedlings which they will grow both for the fruit and the seedlings. Since both apple seedlings and fruit can take a long time to grow (1 to 3 years) the same beneficiaries will also grow vegetables (onion, tomato, pepper etc) which can be produced quicker using irrigation. Each member has also been provided with technical training on management and production of apples and vegetables. This scheme should help members to earn sustainable annual income of 700.00 birr (€55) and improve food availability for their families.

One of the members is named Ato Lemma Lache. According to Ato Lema, he and his large family's lives have improved dramatically since he became involved in this scheme. To date he has earned 5,000.00 birr (€397) from the sales of apple seedlings and 800.00 birr (€63) from vegetables. At the moment

there is a large demand for apple seedlings in Ethiopia - a single apple seedling is worth 45.00 birr (€3.50) alone. Therefore, Ato Lemma plans to grow as many apple seedlings as possible to sell on – securing future income for him and his family.



Local men and women training for the Apple and Vegetable Income Generation Scheme

VITA NEWS FROM ERITREA



Vita Eritrea Team

Drip Irrigation Project

Mrs. Nebait Wekdemariam, 35 is one of the female heads of household who has benefited from the Pilot drip irrigation project supported by Vita in Geza Keren village, Southern Eritrea.

After the death of her husband, she was left on her own to feed her three children who are now only 12, 10 and eight years old as well as her father and mother in-law. The monthly allowance of 500 Nakfa / €26 she earns from the Government's Martyrs Trust Fund is not enough to take care of her and her family. In her own words she says "I had all the internal drive and stamina to face life; but you can not do anything merely with your left hand. What do you do if your right hand is amputated?"

When The Geza Keren Irrigation project started as a pilot project in 2007, Nebait and 78 other farmers in the village were selected to take part in the project. Vita encouraged these farmers to form a vegetable and fruits producing cooperative, by providing them with basic equipment such as submersible pumps and irrigation accessories. Furthermore, two water wells were dug for irrigation purposes and a cooperative bylaw was drawn to help the project.

Nebait is one of those active farmers who has dedicated all her efforts from the start of the project. She says "at first I was happy merely to get something

to work; hence I was supporting everybody and was getting involved even in the physically demanding work of loading and unloading, as well as the installation and maintenance of the irrigation works". She says, now "we are rewarded with dependable income and a decent life style. I can provide my children with nutritious food, buy them clothes and send them to school".

Nebait is now able to earn an income of about 20,000 Nakfa / €1,052 a year from two harvests which is substantially higher than the average of 300 Nakfa / €157.



Nebait Wekdemariam on her way to the co-operative with a bundle of vegetables

Vita encouraged these farmers to form a vegetable and fruits producing cooperative, by providing them with basic equipment such as submersible pumps and irrigation accessories.



A family in Eritrea collecting Moringa leaves to use in their daily cooking

Promoting Moringa Tree in Eritrea

In Eritrea, hundreds of thousands of Moringa Trees are growing in homesteads, along riverbanks, and in woods in both the Anseba and Gash Barka regions. However in both regions rainfall is very unpredictable and erratic, and without irrigation water, local production of nutritious supplementary foods is severely limited. To overcome these challenges, communities take advantage of the many benefits of the Moringa tree.

Between 2006 and 2008 in the Anseba and Gash Barka regions, Vita has distributed about 247,340 Moringa Trees. Many families are gradually adopting Moringa tree leaves into their daily meals. It was not difficult to introduce this to the Kumana villages because forest leaves were already part of their diet. Other groups are being provided with Moringa Tree food demonstrations which highlight the nutritional benefits of the leaves as part of their diet.

Vita has published a brochure to help families and communities understand the many benefits of the Moringa Tree. The brochure was originally published in the native language of Tigrigna and there is a plan to publish it in Arabic, to ensure all households can understand how the Moringa Tree can help them on a daily basis.

VITA FUNDRAISING & EVENTS

For further information on Vita please contact:

Vita, 73a Blessington Street, Dublin 7.
Phone **01 882 0108** Email info@vita.ie
www.vita.ie

Help Vita by claiming Tax Relief for 2007

If you are a PAYE only tax payer, and have given €250 or more to Vita in the course of a tax year, Vita can reclaim the tax paid on your donations.

- **If you are a standard rate tax payer of 20% and if you have given €250 over the course of a year, this will be worth an extra €63 to Vita.**
- **If you are a higher rate taxpayer of 41% and if you have donated €250 over the course of a year, this is worth an extra €181 to Vita.**

Your details are confidential to Vita and the Revenue Commissioners. The information will not be used for anything other than the tax claim. Once a year Vita automatically mails a tax relief form to all individual Vita donors whose donations qualify for a tax reclaim. We recently sent out the forms to claim for 2007 donations. If you haven't returned your form yet, this is a gentle reminder of how your return can help Vita. Thank you.

Green Giving Just World – The most novel Christmas present you'll ever give!

Choose from seven life-improving gifts and help change someone's world this Christmas. From a Chicken Maternity Unit, to a Solar Panel, to Miracle Trees, you'll have no difficulty finding the perfect gift for every friend and relative. Not only that, you get three times the value and impact from them. Firstly you get to choose an inspirational and beautiful present in the name of your friend or relative. Secondly some of the poorest families on earth receive those life transforming gifts. Thirdly you're guaranteed that Vita will be working with that community to improve and protect their livelihoods and environment into the long term.

For more information and to request a catalogue please ring Vita on 01 8820108 or you can order online at www.vita.ie



Trees for Life

Looking for that unique gift?

'Trees for Life' is a novel approach to honour life's many occasions whereby an oak tree is planted in Marlay Park, Dublin for you or a loved one. The trees are planted as gifts for Christmas, birthdays, christenings, anniversaries, communions, confirmations as well as wedding presents. Trees may also be planted to celebrate the arrival of a newborn or in memory of a loved one. For €100, an Oak Tree will be planted in the recipient's name in Marlay Park in Dublin and a personalised gift card will be sent with details of where the tree can be viewed. For each oak tree planted in Marlay Park, the funds can be used to plant 90 Moringa trees in Eritrea or Ethiopia thereby having a meaningful and lasting impact on many families struggling to cope with poverty.

Call Vita at (01) 882 0108 for more information or visit www.vita.ie

Call for Ambassadors/ Fundraisers for Vita

Vita is recruiting Ambassadors around the country to spread the word to their friends, families, colleagues, schools, and colleges about the work we do in Africa and to help raise funds on our behalf so we can continue to combat poverty and protect the environment. There are lots of different ways you can fundraise for Vita, whether you are a member of your local church or community group or social group. Alternatively you can always organise an event on your own. Vita is always delighted to hear from people who are planning to hold an event or take part in a sponsored activity for our benefit. We are more than happy to provide advice, support and fundraising materials for your chosen activity.

If you would like to become an ambassador or hold your own fundraising event please contact Jenny Douglas on (01) 882 0108 or email jenny.douglas@vita.ie

Schools for Vita Challenge – Experience Ethiopia 2009

Vita will be launching the 'Schools for Vita Challenge' at the BT Young Scientist Exhibition at the RDS in January 2009. Three winning schools will each have the opportunity to send two students plus a teacher on an all expenses paid trip to Ethiopia to learn about the challenges facing Ethiopia's people.

The winning students will visit Vita's projects and will return to their schools as Vita Ambassadors to share their knowledge of Ethiopia with their friends, fellow students and teachers. As part of the challenge students are being asked to raise funds for Vita so that current projects can be expanded and new projects can be introduced. The three criteria that will be used to select the winners are: 1) Most funds raised 2) Most creative fundraising event and 3) Highest visibility event. This is a great opportunity to make a difference and experience Ethiopia in 2009.

For more information, please contact Siobhán Hamilton at (01) -8820108 or siobhan.hamilton@vita.ie.

Vita would also like to take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge the ongoing partnerships with Irish Aid and the EU.

Vita is registered in Ireland, No. 152968. Registered office is 73a Blessington Street, Dublin.7.

Vita has been granted tax exemption from Irish Revenue Commissioners and has a charitable tax exemption No. CHY 9670